

About the son, a known adulterer
Who finally ran off; their youngest gambles;
Behind its pillars, the east wing's a shambles;
Their girl was ruined by the gardener.

The Duchess is a shadow among more
Shadows of heirlooms sold. The family jewels
Are paste. The Duke defends forgotten duels:
"My dear, there is no honor anymore."

And what lies in the bottom of a glass?
Ladies with parasols and gliding swans,
Chateaus whose shadows float on lakes and lawns.
Now everything once gold has turned to brass.

Their carpets are not from the Orient.
No peer has come to leave his calling-card.
Their days are done; their nights are evil-starred.
They cannot pay the servants nor the rent,

Nor change, nor end. And even if they could
Escape the darkness turned to tedium
Of trunk and closet, why should they become
A little more of man, and less of wood?

-- Martha Grimes

Silver Spring, Maryland

The Nightmare Is Over

I'd always been a great
lover of books
polar ends of a continuum

Lerwick, principal town
of the Shetlands
founded by Dutch smugglers
in 1670
Shetland=Zetland.

In the Zetlands as elsewhere
children get born
old people die
in a water cycle,

people try to get in touch with Blake
thru the Chevreul pendulum
automatic writing.

Bewildering multiplicity
of gods & goddesses.